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SPECIAL PROPHET

St. Elijah (Iilyah), who we commemorate on July 20/August 2, is one of the most loved saints among the Carpathian people. His day is celebrated with great enthusiasm in parishes which were founded by people from this area. They were primarily agricultural and just enough rain during the growing season meant enough to eat from one harvest until the other instead of starvation. St. Elijah, according to the Bible, had power over rain, hail, thunder, and lightning. It was natural that he would be revered. There are many proverbs in which he is mentioned. One of them concerns working on his day. A worker was considered to be in great danger, especially if he worked in the fields. (Lightning is common during this season.)

Who was St. Elijah? He lived in the 9th century before Christ was born. He is considered one of the greatest Hebrew prophets. He remained faithful to God when all around him forgot the One True God. Although he never wrote anything, his story is told in 1 Kings starting with the 17th chapter and in 2 Kings. He is also mentioned in many other places in both the Old and New Testaments. The readings for this day are taken from James 5:10-20 and Luke 4:22-30.

Interestingly, he is mentioned at the end of the Old Testament in Malachi 4:5-6: "Behold I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

Then he opens the New Testament. We read in Luke 1:16-17 that the angel appeared to Zachariah, the

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INDEPENDENCE DAY

We celebrate July 4 as the day when the public proclamation was made of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. But what do we really know about this Declaration? Do you know that 52 of the 56 were deeply committed Christians, who stood tall and straight, and unwavering pledged: "For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor?" The others all believed in the Bible as the divine truth, the God of scripture, and in His personal intervention. One of the first things that the Continental Congress did after the Proclamation was to vote to purchase and import 20,000 copies of the Bible for the people of a new nation.

As time went on, the pledge these men took, proved not to be empty words. Most did lose their lives and fortunes but never their honor.

The following words appear in the Declaration of Independence. Can you match each with its meaning?

1. Inalienable
2. relinquish
3. transient
4. insurrection
5. absolved

A. cleared of guilt or blame
B. passing with time
C. never to be taken away
D. revolt against a government
E. give up

1. C; 2. E; 3. B; 4. D; 5 A

* * * * * *

The good we do today becomes the happiness of tomorrow.

VJECNAJA PAMJAT MEMORY ETERNAL

Vjecnaja pamjat, memory eternal, is the short prayer that closes the opelo, parastas, and pomen services, which call for laying to rest or remembering the deceased of our community. People may think that this prayer refers only to memory in this world, but as the late Bishop Nikolaj observes, the eternal memory is indeed eternal, for what gain would there be if one's name were remembered until the end of time but forgotten in heaven? Thus, it is correct to believe that in prayer we are commending those who have fallen asleep to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. That is the real meaning of vjecnaja pamjat.

The Bible tells us how the names of the righteous will be inscribed in the Book of Life, while the names of the unrighteous will be forgotten. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, found in the Gospel of Luke, we see that the Lord pronounces the name of Lazarus, who enters the Kingdom of Heaven, but that the name of the rich man, prohibited from entering Heaven, is omitted.

Thus we see that the Church teaches and practices the eternal remembrance of our deceased faithful. We might bear in mind that countless numbers of people have passed through this life without noise or notice, but have received an eternal name in Heaven where neither death nor change exist. We are advised to bear this understanding in mind whenever we sing or hear this short but meaninful prayer.

(This is from a new book WORDS OF A SHEPHERD, The Life and Writings of the Very Rev. Protostavrophor Vojislav Dosenovich.

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CHRONOLOGY

JULY 2006

JAROSLAV PELIKAN, a Yale professor and one of the world's foremost scholars of the history of Christianity, died on May 13. He authored more than 30 books, among them the monumental five-volume series, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine. It has been described as a history of Christian doctrine on a scale no one has attempted before. Mr. Pelikan accepted the Orthodox faith a few years ago.

A LAW PASSED IN GREECE will allow cremation for non-Orthodox residents whose religious convictions allow it. The Church, however, expects Orthodox Christians to continue to be buried. The Orthodox Church has traditionally opposed cremation, saying it undermines the Christian doctrine of resurrection and violates the respect to human remains.

A 17-MEMBER DELEGATION from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met with Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul. In 2009 Lutherans will commemorate the 450 anniversary of the first contact of an Orthodox and Lutheran for dialogue. Deacon Demetrios Mysos spent May 20 to the end of September in Wittenberg, Germany, comparing the faiths. The deacon carried a letter from Professor Philip Melanchthon to Patriarch Joasaph II along with a Greek translation of the Augsburg Confession, which is the basic doctrinal statement of the Lutheran Reformation. Several contacts followed but were cut off when they reached an impasse on: "The tradition of the Church and differing views of human nature, including considerations of freewill, the fall of humanity and original sin, and faith producing good works."

A MYSTERY. In the village of Nikolai, Alaska the church is popularly referred to as St. Nicholas. Recently, upon examination, it was found that upon restoration in 1934, Bishop Alexy had dedicated it to St. Peter.

BLOGGING is the latest on-line trend. The blog found on http://www.conciliarpress.com/blog/ was created to "bring together insightful writers and thinkers and allow them the opportunity to discuss how our Orthodox faith can best be applied to the challenges posed by the modern world. Go to http://www.troparia.com to find articles on Orthodox history as well as links to Orthodox sites around the world. The Orthodox Church is worldwide.

EMILY IS TOP NAME for girls born in 2005, followed by Emma, Madison, Abigail, Olivia, Isabella, Hannah, Samantha, Ava and Ashley. Emily has had this honor for the last 10 years. Favorite boys' names are Jacob, Michael, Joshua, Matthew, Ethan, Andrew, Daniel, Anthony, Christopher and Joseph.

THE U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN MUSEUM has been opened at Fort Jackson, SC. It tells the story of the Army Chaplaincy from the Revolutionary War to the current war on terror. For more info call 803/751-8079 or go to www.usachcs.army.mil and click on "Museum."

IN 1974 THE JACKSON-VANIK AMENDMENT was passed by the U.S. Congress. It linked trade benefits to the emigration and human rights policies of communists states. On March 9, 2006 the Congress voted to end Cold War restrictions. This opens Ukraine to join the World Trade Organization. It should make it easier for Ukrainians, among other former countries of the USSR, to get visas to visit the U.S.

A CALENDAR/ALMANAC FOR 2006 has been released by the Romanian Episcopate Dept. Publications, PO Box 185, Grass Lakes, MI 49240-0185. Price $15. Besides the usual listing of parishes and clergy, typical calendar of saints parish activities of 2005, etc., it featured several articles on Mount Athos. One added feature, which is worthy of copying, are the pages devoted to directions to churches and monasteries, usually given from an interstate or main road.

GOING AWAY TO COLLEGE IS A TIME OF GREAT CHALLENGE. To help your college-bound student stay focused and closer to their values and faith, furnish them with materials showing you care. The Orthodox Christian Fellowship has put together the OCF Connect Lit, which aims to equip the college student with resources and information to aid them to grow in and connect them to their faith. For info: call 800-919-10CF or go to www.ocf.net.

RUSSIAN LITURGICAL MUSIC by Alexander Gretcheniniv - the "Nicene Creed" was sung in Slavonic at the wedding of Prince Charles and Camela.

AT THE FESTIVAL OF ORTHODOX MASS MEDIA held in Russia in November, discussion was held on establishing a non-clerical Orthodox TV Channel. A senior manager of a West Siberian TV station said: "Let's drop that habit (of focusing on clergymen in full attire with glittering crosses, the domes of rural churches, or women with pious faces wearing head scarves, fervently making the sign of the cross), let's show real people just like you and me, going about their daily activities, facing the same issues as everyone else."

IT IS NOW POSSIBLE to get a Master's degree in Orthodox studies on the West Coast of the U.S. at the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, CA. For info phone 510/649-3450 or fax 510-841-6605.

(Continued from front page)

SPECIAL PROPHET

father of St. John the Baptist and said: “And many of the children of Israel shall he (John the Baptist) turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Who was St. Elijah? As written in 1 Kings, he brought a young boy back to life who had starved to death during the three-year drought, he prayed for rain and it came, he asked for it to stop and it did, he shared the glory with Enoch of not seeing death before being taken into heaven, he went to heaven in a flaming chariot, he is fed by ravens when he was isolated, and he worshipped the true God when those around him and in power didn’t.

He was present at the Transfiguration of Our Lord. He is pictured at one side of Jesus representing the Prophets, while Moses is on the other side representing the Law.

Churches dedicated to St. Elijah are often found in high or remote places. Because of the fiery chariot, he is known as the protector of forests and woods and against lightning striking. His life is similar in many ways to that of St. John the Baptist and this is reflected in the Vesper Service in which three readings are taken from the books of Kings. This is a distinction he shares only with St. John. Among the Carpathian people, there are many beautiful spiritual non-liturgical songs sung in his honor. They also included, among their beloved songs, the Kondak for the day: “O prophet, who foresaw the mighty deeds of our God, O great Elias, who through your prayers, stopped rain, intercede for us with the only One Who loves mankind.”

(Continued from front page)

VJECNAJA PAMJAT

Compiled and edited by Nicolae Roddy. To obtain a copy, send $14 to Holy Trinity Monastery Bookstore, PO Box 36, Jordanville, NY 13361-0036.)

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

There were Seven Ecumenical Councils held between the years of 325 and 757. The decisions made at these Councils serve as the foundation of Christian doctrine accepted by both the Eastern and Western segments of the Christian Church. When these Councils were held, the church was one.

The First Ecumenical Council was convened on May 20, 325 in the city of Nicea. It was called because differences began to appear in various areas on what the teachings of the Church were all about. The main difference was about the person of Jesus. Arius, a priest in the Alexandrian Church was teaching that Jesus Christ was created by God and so there was a time when “he was not.” He maintained that the Son of God is only the highest creation. A number of bishops followed Arius, and the Church went into her first and perhaps deepest division of faith.

Up to this year of 325, those who were about to be baptized recited statements of faith – what they believed. Several different Creeds were used. Arius submitted one which was rejected. The Creed submitted by the Church of Jerusalem was accepted with additions. These additions confirmed the “dogma that the Son of God is true God, born of God the Father before all ages, and is eternal, as is God the Father; He was begotten, and not made, and is of one essence with God the Father.”

In order that all Christians may know exactly the true teaching of the faith, this was clearly and concisely summarized in the first of the seven sections of the Creed, or as it is known as the Symbol of Faith.

Other matters were discussed and resolved at this Council. One of these was when Easter/Pascha was to be celebrated. They established a calendar formula still used by the Orthodox Church. Pascha/Easter was to be celebrated on the first full moon following the spring equinox, after the Jewish Passover.

The question of married priests was also discussed. An eloquent argument against compulsory celibacy was given by Paphnutios, an Egyptian who had suffered such hardships and cruelty during the persecution of Maximin that his mutilated body proved an object of veneration to the 318 assembled bishops. His recommendations were highly respected.

The Council also regulated matters of ecclesiastical importance regarding territorial and moral questions pertaining to both clergy and laymen.

Paphnutios was not the only one who had suffered persecution for his faith. There were others among the 318 bishops who attended. Some of their names are more familiar than others. Among them were St. Nicholas (one of the most popular saints). All of them are commemorated on the Seventh Sunday after Easter, which falls on June 12 this year.

The Council ended on July 25 after two months of intensive deliberations.

NOT WRITTEN

The agrapha is a phrase meaning “things not written.” It was used in the early church to refer to sayings of Jesus that his followers remembered but which were not written down in any of the Gospels. For example, in Acts 20:35, St. Paul quotes the Lord Jesus as saying: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Those words cannot be found in any of the Gospels, so apparently that is one of the things the Lord’s followers remembered Him saying and they would cite Him as the source even though it was never written down.

WINGS OF A DOVE

“Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.” David weighed down by his duties, must have wished he could take flight from his tasks. He might have selected almost any bird to express this wish in Psalm 55, yet he chose the dove for a particular reason. The former shepherd knew that while most birds can fly, only doves can take off with a sudden burst of speed and sustain their powerful flight for a long distance.

WHY FORGIVE

There is not a day that passes when human beings refrain from hurting each other in either a willful or unintentional manner. These occurrences happen in the work place, stores, at home, within organizations, churches, schools and government institutions. Feelings are hurt, bodies injured, innocence stolen, reputations soiled, marriages broken, friendships severed, livelihoods shattered. Wherever there are humans, this is bound to happen.

In a wonderful book entitled, ***"Why Forgive"***, Johann Christoph Arnold tells the untidy experiences of ordinary people who speak for themselves – people who have earned the right to talk about overcoming hurt, and about the peace of mind they have found in doing so. Even when we recognize the need to forgive, we are tempted to claim that we cannot. It is simply too hard, too difficult – something for saints, but not for us. But, if we refuse to forgive one who has asked for our forgiveness, do we place ourselves superior to the Divine?

Although, forgiveness doesn't come easy. You can always solve more problems and prevent future wrongdoing through forgiveness than you can with holding grudges and practicing revenge.

Putting a cross on top of a church is an open declaration that God and forgiveness are found here; come and experience it! Then it would stand to reason that the congregation not only believes in forgiveness, but is proclaiming it boldly to the world!

At a recent convention of the Federated Orthodox Clubs of America, Metropolitan Herman (OCA) said, ***"We must never stop forgiving."*** Reflecting on Matthew 18:23-35, the Primate commented, "When the man was to lose all that he had, the king asked him no questions but immediately forgave him unconditionally. How many times have we refused to forgive? How many husbands and wives have said about their spouses, if only he/she had forgiven me, if only he/she had seen how I wanted to change my life? How many marriages would be saved, how many fewer children in orphanages? ***All must forgive,*** neighbor-neighbor, brother-sister, even children. Forgiveness is preparation for Eternal Life. Unless we are all willing to forgive, the Lord tells us, we will not be forgiven."

Whether we are of the clergy or laity, we are called to be icons of Christ's forgiveness not just once a year during the Rite of Mutual Forgiveness, but each day of our lives. When we make a conscious choice to forgive, we are letting our higher inner self sparkle and shine. The spiritual freedom that is experienced when we forgive is boundless. Forgiveness is a permanent and valuable gift that we can give to another human being. "Should not you also have had compassion on your fellow (servant) (man), even as I had pity on you?" (Matthew 18:33).

Raymond J. Mastroberte
Iconographer

PRESS FUND

I was complaining to a friend how much the cost of publishing The Orthodox Herald was going up. She asked me: "When did you shop last? Everything is going up." As I write in some of my thank-you notes, I could not keep publishing without the help I get from your extra donations. You are truly a blessing!

Anne Dorozynski, Marie Grabania, Connie Morgan, Catherine Shaffchick, Irene Allen, Dr. Helen Kee, Dr. Dimitrios Pappas, Ethel Watlock, Mary Sernak, Courtland Swift, Edward and Marylyn Chuprinko, Harry Boyko, Nina Andrenyak, Mary Hritcko, Ann Wilson, Anonymous (2).

*Helen Sadow in memory of Anna Washesko Marco

*W. Wasyluk in memory of wife Anna and parents Stefan and Ann Wasyluk

*Frank and Irene Hoffman in memory of son and mother

*Evelyn Fetzko in memory of her mother Margaret Hilshansky.

USE SENSE

St. Antony the Great said: A hunter of wild desert animals happened to come to Abba Antony's mountain. He was disturbed to see that Abba was affording consolation to the brethren. The Elder, wanting to calm him down and show him that sometimes it was necessary to allow the brethren some relaxation, he said to him: "Notch an arrow in your bow and draw it back." The hunter did so. The Elder said, "Draw it tighter." The hunger drew the bowstring tighter. The Elder again said, "Even tighter." The hunter answered, "If I over tighten the bow, it will break." To that Abba Antony replied, "It is the same with God's work. If you strain the powers of the brethren beyond their capacity, they will soon fall away from doing God's work. It is essential that from time to time they be given a degree of relaxation. On hearing this, the hunter expressed his agreement, and departed from the Elder having received something of great use; the brethren, confirmed in a correct attitude toward their *podvig,* went to their cells.

Commentary by Holy Hierarch St. Ignaty Brainchaninov: This is an extremely important account! All spiritual struggles taken on without corresponding strength are abandoned. The impression left by an abandoned excessive *podvig* is so harmful that the spiritual strugglers who abandon an immoderate *podvig* ordinarily abandon any *podvig* at all, and turn to a careless way of life, to spiritual disorder. St. Isaac the Syrian says, "Immoderate work is followed by despondency, and despondency, by frenzy," i.e. by disorder! Here one may add that *consolation* is the name for a certain relaxation in the usual order of the brethren's way of life, primarily in the realm of food. When fish, wine, or fruit is part of their meals, it is referred to as a *consolation.* When on great Feast Days, all of these things are part of the meal, the *consolation* is referred to as a *great* one. When a sick person or an elder is clothing more comfortable than that generally worn by the brethren, that is also called a *consolation.*

Memories

Church Family

When I read Barbara Powell's memory in the June issue, it brought to mind my own wedding. When I sat thinking about it I realized how very much it revolved around the church. My baba once told me that we don't have secret weddings in the Orthodox Church. We get married in the midst of our fellow believers.

It was strange hearing the priest read the bans from the altar and I was worried that someone would "not hold their peace." The last Sunday, he read the announcement, he included that all the parish was invited to the ceremony and he gave the time and day. It was less than a week away!

When we sent out our invitations, we had to take them in person to our godparents. That was the honor we had to show them that they were special and at this time we introduced our future mates to them.

To show you how long ago it was, only unmarried girls could be bridesmaids. The married one was matron of honor. And as far as the gown was concerned. If the gown had bare shoulders, the bride had to wear a shawl to cover up while in the church.

The church was not forgotten at the reception. A collection was made for it. The amount collected was announced at the next service.

Things sure were different!

Mary Casher

Please send your memories to Margaret Pysarchyk at 2125 Garfield St., Lorain, OH 44055 or at mypysarchyk@hotmail.com

BIBLE QUIZ

1. What did God change Jacob's name to?
2. Who told Joseph what Jesus' name would be?
3. What did God change Adam's name to?
4. Who was told by an angel that his son was to be named John?
5. What new name did Jesus give to Simon?
6. What was Sarai's name changed to?
7. Who told Mary that her son was to be named Jesus?

ANSWERS:
1. Israel (Genesis 32:28)
2. An angel (Matthew 1:20-21)
3. Abraham (Genesis 17:5)
4. Zacharias (Luke 1:13)
5. Peter (John 1:42)
6. Sarah (Genesis 17:15)
7. The angel Gabriel (Luke 1:30-31)

WINTER'S GRACE

Just before God's people entered the Promised Land, Moses told them: "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren." (Deuteronomy 4:9)

That same responsibility is still ours. We have such a rich religious heritage and we cherish it, but we tend to keep it to ourselves. Too often, parents and elders seem afraid or ashamed to speak of religious matters to their children. They want the best for their children. They are busy enrolling them in all kinds of classes and sports and yet fail to make time for the instruction or teaching which will help them to face life with its joys and sorrows. Why do we shortchange our children or grandchildren?

FUNDS

While I was taking notes from the July 1956 issue, I happened to notice the Alaska Fund. I was surprised to see how many donated to this fund. As their names were listed, I said a prayer for those who are no longer with us and one of good wishes to those who are still with us and many of them still subscribing to The Orthodox Herald! Donating this month are:

ALASKA: Mary Adam, Laura Smakula, Ethel Watlock, Dorothy Warycka in memory of her husband Samuel, who died in January.

BOTH ALASKA AND MISSION: St. Nectarios Monastery, Matushka Mary Ann Logan, Marie Grabania.

POSTAGE: Leslie Ann Wokutch, Mary Butynski, Joe and Marge Roman, Annie Welch, Marie Grabania, Alice Yankosky, Nick Berezniak, Dr. Helen Kee, James Mahlke, Olga Kohl, Nina Andrenyak, W. Wasyluk.

THE BIBLICAL MIRACLE RECURS ON THE JORDAN DURING THEOPHANY, 2006

As reported in Moscow, on January 24, 2006, on the website Interfax, some five thousand pilgrims from various countries became witnesses to a sign that appeared on the holy river of Jordan on Theophany.

Immediately after Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem performed the rite of the blessing of water, the Jordan boiled up and began to flow back just as it happened after the baptism of Christ, the *Zhizn* (Life) daily writes.

Right after silver crosses were thrown into its calm waters after the prayer, the river boiled up. A maelstrom developed and the current flowed back for several minutes.

An ecstatic cry of five thousand people resounded over the Jewish desert. People refused to believe their own eyes, just as they did two thousand years when the Jordan turned its current after Jesus Christ entered its waters, the newspaper writes.

from "Orthodox Life"

LIGHTER MOMENT

A senior citizen was speeding in his brand new Mercedes convertible, enjoying going over 120 miles an hour. He looked in his rear view mirror and saw in the distance a state trooper behind him, blue lights flashing, and siren blaring.

"What am I doing?" the old man thought, "I am too old for this kind of thing." He pulled over and waited for the trooper to catch up. The trooper walked up to the old man and said, "Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes, and it's Friday. I am looking forward to my weekend off. If you can give me a reason why you were speeding, a reason I've never heard before, I'll let you go."

The old man looked at the trooper and said, "Years ago my wife ran off with a state trooper, and I thought you were bringing her back..." The trooper replied, "Sir, have a nice day!"

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyota Mareea,

Yak tam kolo vas?

Too uh nas now shitko OK no yah mala takee scary situation zhe yah dumala zheh yah ushee dostanyu heart attack. Tak peeshlo. Me next door neighbor poklikala me na telephone ee zvedala me chee yah be so kind as to take a bus trip to New York "as we need to fill the seats." Yah kashyu yeh OK if ohna me not leave boh yah never been to New York. Ohna duma long time then povela me alright Yah zaplateelay hroshee ee me peeshlee na trip.

First, me peeshlee shopping. No yakto me next door neighbor ee yeh dear friends ee yah got separated. Yah hlyahdala ee hlyahdala no neh find them. Yah neh znala yak find halluy. Yah bulla taka scared yah neznala shto robitee. Yah taka panickovala zhe yah zabula name of show and hall.

Yah peshla nah vonka Na sidewalkee yah shtopuyyuh people. Asking: "Mr. chee Mrs. where is hall for show. Ohnee me nech neh kazhut. Yah became frantic. Yah neh znah yak yehm povestee me message. Then came to me idea! Yah kazhu "Mr che Mrs. You know dance hall." ee yah started to do small dance tam nah sidewalku. Yah dostala takee action. Oden cheloveek me kaskey: "You crazy lady." Druhee mladee me doll dolyara uh hand ee kazhe: "You remind me of my poor mother. Go get yourself another beer." Two zhenee povee: "Isn't it a shame. She doesn't look the type. You never can tell." Yah dumam zhe yah scrazuyu. Yah taka nervous yah dancing faster ee faster ee kretchyu; "Dance hall, dance hall."

Policeman preshol ee kazhe ludyam around me: "Keep moving." Ohn take me zah elbow ee kazhe: "What's wrong mama?" Yah taka glad to see him. Yah started to plakatee ee poveela yehmyu me story. Ohn kazhee: "I think you're looking for Radio City Music Hall. It's two blocks straight ahead."

Yah tam nashla me group ah me neighbor said: "Ann, we missed you. What happened to you? Were you delayed by the disturbance two blocks from here? We couldn't see what was happening there were too many people."

Yah yeh answered: "I had very different experience. I'll never forget it."

Learned a lesson, never travel without ticket.

Budthey Zdrovee,
Hanya

I HURT

You hurt; you are depressed; you don't know what to do to find peace or relief. Have you tried prayer? It may seem a simplistic answer but prayer can bring comfort and lessens the effects of sorrow. Should it be difficult to pray when in sorrow, tell it to the Lord. Start your prayer with the following: "Lord, it is difficult for me to pray and I don't know what to do." When you appeal to the Lord in this way your heart will soon relax. Take a moment to calm down and then continue: "Lord, please help me, don't forget me, don't abandon me in this my time of need."

If you are in sorrow or trouble – dare to pray!

Pray as well as you know how, and quite possibly before you have time to finish the prayer you will feel an easing of your sorrow and the rays of hope brightening your soul. You will say to yourself: "Everything is not lost, I have a chance." When your spirits are down, don't neglect coming to the church, think about the passion of Christ, the sorrow of the Mother of God and the martyrs. Gaze upon the icon of our Lord as you pray and make the sign of the cross. Your heart will lighten to the words of the holy song. "You are my fortress, my strength, and my God."

NAG HAMMADI

This is a town in northern Egypt where, in 1946, Coptic translations of 13 papyrus volumes of ancient Gnostic writings were found. The discovery made possible a more distinct picture of contrast between Christian Gnosticism and Orthodox Christianity.

Undique (from everywhere)

There are some traditions that do not use art at all, with a belief that it is impossible to portray Jesus at all. And there are traditions, especially the Orthodox Church, that say He had to be visible if He was human and portraying Him that way affirms the incarnation. (Robin Jensen)

One of the most interesting discoveries of recent gerontology is that each person is in reality three different ages at once: the chronological age, which is determined by the number of years one has lived; the biological age, which is determined by the condition and state of the body; and finally, the psychological age, which is measured by how a person feels and acts. "So we do not lose heart, though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day." 2 Cor 4:16

Scripture and Tradition are different expressions of the same reality: Apostolic teaching. The earliest Christian sayings and stories of Jesus were passed along by word of mouth. It can be said that Tradition pre-dates the New Testament, because oral tradition preceded the written expression.

Giving until it hurts is not a true measure of charity. Some are more easily hurt than others.

The excellent highway system constructed throughout the Mediterranean world by the Romans was traveled frequently by St. Paul. It was built so that Roman armies could move swiftly and their traders could deliver goods efficiently, the Roman roads also contributed to the spread of the Christian message. It is frequently said that the autovan system in Germany and the interstate system in the U.S. were built for the same two reasons.

The Book enthroned upon the altar table is not the entire Bible. It is called the Book of Gospels because it only contains the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. This shows that the life of the Church is centered in Christ who abides forever among His people, the Church.

Editor's Notes

The Great Generation, those who took part in the Second World War or lived during that time, are rapidly leaving this world. The next generation, those over 65, are now, as a rule, retired from employment and have more control over their time. Unfortunately, they are not using any of this time to attend church services during the week. Not only do they neglect church attendance on the Holy Days such as St. Elijah or St. Vladimir, which will be celebrated during this month, but they fail to observe the Twelve Main Holy Days. This is especially disturbing because they represent the first attendees of our nascent Sunday Schools, the first who had access to books in English on the faith, and the first to hear most of the services in English. The Church had responded to their plight when they complained that they couldn't understand the Church Slavonic. What's wrong now?

There is a problem in the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) which is being well discussed on the Internet and among the adherents of this jurisdiction. What led to this sad situation? It is the fault of all who didn't bother to read the material sent out prior to the Church Councils and discuss the proposals. For years, The Orthodox Herald has been warning that the Councils (Sobors) were losing effectiveness. They were improperly constituted. They became a time for a "vacation" instead of a time for serious deliberation on how God's Church could be best brought forth. If we did not attend congregational meetings, especially when the matters which were to be brought up at the Sobors were discussed, we should not give up now but vow to amend our ways. There is plenty of blame on all.

"We have seen the true Light! We have received the heavenly Spirit! We have found the true Faith! Worshipping the undivided Trinity, who has saved us."

Matushka Nina

SOBORNOST
ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

Traditional Acceptance

Traditionally, the East accepts only seven Ecumenical Councils, the last of which is Nicea II (787). There is some discussion concerning a possible eighth Ecumenical Council. The Latin tradition proposes the Council of 869-870, held in Constantinople, which deposed Photius, as Ecumenical Patriarch. Eastern theologians propose the Council of 879-880, which restored Photius as Patriarch. Since there is no agreement on this issue, dialogue keeps the number of priority councils in the Church, both upon which East and West agree, at seven. According to Florovsky, among these seven councils, the first four have a further priority because of the importance of the truths they established.

With the separation of East and West, a new meaning was given to the word "ecumenical." This meaning is a secular and political one. It indicates a "union council" with the West with the purpose of restoring the old "ecumene" (as was the case at Lyons and Ferrara-Florence).

To conclude the topic of the "meaning" of Ecumenical Councils, let it suffice to say that these imperial councils were convened by the emperor and were councils of bishops only. It is the position of some, Meyendorff among them, that these imperial councils as such cannot be repeated because there is no longer a Christian Empire. Nonetheless, the episcopal consensus they achieved is always valid in the life of the Church. These seven Ecumenical Councils are not, however, the only source of **magisterium** in the Eastern Church. They are not the only criteria of the Holy Spirit's action in the Church. Local councils, which also witness to the truth, are also very important in the life of Orthodox Christianity.

Next month, we shall start discussion on the Local Councils.

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How often do you go out for "Chinese"? That seems to be the favorite of many. I once had a friend whose parents did mission work in China. She gave me this recipe for Chinese Pepper Steak, which is my favorite. It freezes well and all you need to complete your meal would be to boil some rice and make a salad and perhaps a fresh fruit dessert.

CHINESE PEPPER STEAK

1 1/2 lbs. sirloin steak
1/4 cup oil
1 clove garlic
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. pepper
3 green peppers
2 large onions
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/2 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup beef bouillon
1 can water chestnuts
1 Tbls. cornstarch
1/4 cup cold water
4 green onions

Cut steak in thin strips. Slice the green peppers and onions. Cut the green onion in 1 inch strips. Saute garlic until golden in oil. Add salt, pepper and ginger. Add steak and brown a few minutes. Remove steak. Add green pepper and onion and cook three minutes. Return beef to pan and add soy sauce, sugar, bouillon, water chestnuts and cornstarch dissolved in cold water. Mix. Cook until thickened. Add green onions and serve over rice.

* * * * * *

Orthodox Christians are monotheists. This means that we believe in one God. When we acknowledge that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each part of the triune God, we still hold to the unity of God. We acknowledge this in the Creed: "I believe in ONE God."

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THE DA VINCI CODE

Everybody likes a good story, but, unfortunately, many people are taking the best selling novel, The Da Vinci Code, and the movie based on it, as historical fact.

Central to the plot line is the allegation that lost books of the Bible "have been suppressed by the Church for centuries. These lost books, and there are many of them, claim that Jesus married Mary Magdalene and had children with her. This radically misrepresents history and is misleading many people."

These alleged: "lost books of the Bible" were found at Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945. Among them are: the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Judas. They deny the biblical Jesus and promote goddess worship, self-deity, and secret knowledge. St. Ireneaus wrote against them as far back as c.130.

So why did the Church exclude these books from the canon of the Bible as we know it? Because the documents did not meet the criteria for authentic Scripture, which involved several central questions: Was the writer someone Jesus had chosen as an apostle? Did the book have widespread acceptance among church leaders? Did God's Spirit speak through it? The so-called "lost books" did not pass these tests. All the books we have in our New Testament did.

* * * * * *

If we hem in both ends of the day with prayer, it won't be so likely to unravel in the middle.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

JULY 2006

1. Rom 3:28-4:3	**16. Rom 10:1-10**
2. Rom 5:1-10	17. Rom 16:17-24
3. Rom 9:18-32	18. 1 Cor 1:1-9
4. Rom 10:11-11:2	19. 1 Cor 2:9-3:8
5. Rom 12:2-12	20. 1 Cor 3:18-23
6. Rom 11:13-24	21. 1 Cor 4:5-8
7. Rom 11:25-36	22. Rom 9:1-5
8. Rom 6:11-17	**23. Rom 12:6-14**
9. Rom 6:18-23	24. 1 Cor 5:9-6:11
10. Rom 12:4,5,15-21	25. 1 Cor 6:20-7:12
	26. 1 Cor 7:12-24
11. Rom 14:9-18	27. 1 Cor 7:24-35
12. Rom 16:7-16	28. 1 Cor 7:35-8:7
13. Rom 15:17-29	29. Rom 12:1-3
14. Rom 16:1-16	**30. Rom 15:1-7**
15. Rom 8:14-21	31. 1 Cor 9:13-18

BIBLE STUDY

This month some of the readings are taken from the letters which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Corinth was a large cosmopolitan city of about 700,000 people. Two-thirds of them were slaves. It was located on a small piece of land between the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. There was a port on both seas. Many ships were rolled across the narrow isthmus on wooden rails or dragged from one sea to the other. Thus, the need for so many slaves. This saved a 200-mile trip around southern Greece. There were several attempts to dig a canal through the isthmus but this was not done until 1893 and today the canal is a well-traveled sea lane.

In St. Paul's day, the city was filled with shrines and temples. The most prominent one was the temple of Aphrodite. It also contained many business and government buildings.

St. Paul started preaching Christ here and the church grew. He left the city and Apollo took over. This is why the question comes up about the work they did and their differences. In 1 Cor. 3:5, St. Paul writes to them: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo? ... I have planted. Apollo has watered..."

It appears that St. Paul was in Corinth for 18 months and he sowed the seeds and when Apollo came a short while after he left he made a great impression by his eloquence and knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. Unlike St. Timothy and Silas, who acted as assistants to St. Paul, Apollo acted on his own, he took full responsibility and used his great gifts to extend St. Paul's work. It is said that Apollo exceeded every other Christian teacher except St. Paul in eloquence and argumentative power. This is the reason why so much of chapter 3 expounds on their respective work.

ARMAGEDDON

This is the name of the battlefield where the final great battle between good and evil will take place. St. John's vision in Revelations 16:16 of the "great day of God" will be fulfilled here. Scholars place Armageddon near the mountain of Megiddo, where important battles, from 1400 B.C. to the 20th century, have been fought.